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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRATEGY PLANNING PROCESS AND
PERFORMANCE OF MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE -KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Public organizations often implement strategic planning to improve organizational performance. But this decision is based on an assumption made by practitioners and academics alike. There are fundamental changes that have taken place in the Kenya economic scene over the last few years such as the liberalization which has established free market and increased competition in the economic scene. Therefore, the essential question is whether or not strategic planning improves performance levels of ministries in Kenya. The objective of this study was to assess the relationship between strategic planning process and performance in Government ministries in Kenya with an emphasis on the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. The study took the form of a descriptive research survey which is considered appropriate because subjects are normally observed in their natural set up and the result are accurate and reliable. The target population for this study involved all the employees who are involved with strategic planning process at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries headquarters in Nairobi. Both primary and secondary data was collected for the purpose of this study and analysed using descriptive statistics. The collected data was analysed by use of SPSS software. Analysed data was presented inform of tables, pie charts and bar graphs. The study showed a high and positive correlation between strategic planning process and performance in the ministry. The study concluded that proper adoption of strategic planning process will improve all government agencies' client satisfaction, reduced service delivery cost, staff moral and retain accountability. Government ministries in Kenya need to understand strategic planning and to be skilled in strategic thinking, strategic analysis and methods of strategy execution is a basic aspect that all managers should always take into consideration.

Keywords: *Strategic planning, organizational performance and Government ministries.*

Background of the Study

There are several definitions of strategic planning but there is no commonly accepted or universal definition of concept of strategic planning because different writers define it from several points of view (Yang, 2008). Strategic planning is the process of developing and maintaining consistency between the organization's objectives and resources and its changing opportunities (Alexander, 2005). According to Wagner (2006) the importance of strategic planning can be explained from four points of view including environmental scanning, strategy formulation, and linking goals to budgets and strategic planning as a process. Strategic planning encompasses making of strategic choices to position a firm at an advantage against stakeholder involvement in the long-term, (Johnson & Scholes, 2008).

There are fundamental changes that have taken place in the Kenya economic scene over the last few years such as the liberalization which has established free market and increased competition in the economic scene. Therefore, the essential question is whether or not strategic planning improves performance levels of ministries in Kenya. The public sector in Kenya is faced with the challenge of poor and declining performance, which inhibits realization of sustainable economic growth. The Public sector has consistently fallen below expectations due to: Excessive regulations and controls; Frequent political interference; Poor leadership and management; Outright mismanagement (Kenya Railways, Kenya Meat Commission); Bloated staff establishments; Multiplicity of principals and non-performing employees. In addition to regressing economic growth, the declining in Public Service has resulted to poor performance, poor service delivery, degeneration of infrastructure and severe brain drain (GOK, 2007).

Since the 1990's the Government of Kenya has been implementing Civil Service Reform Programs with the aim of reducing the Government wage bill streamlining and rationalizing Government ministries and departments, strengthening personnel and payroll controls and building capacity (GOK, 2007). A number of public service reforms have been initiated in the very recent aiming at placing citizen satisfaction at the heart of policy making and service delivery in Kenya (GOK, 2007). The government has continued to intensify efforts to bring about attitudinal change in public service, service delivery orientation, skills inventory assessments, performance management, computerization of service delivery, as well as training and development (GOK, 2007). One such effort is issuance of guidelines on the preparation of strategic plans for all Government Agencies by the Ministry of Planning, National Development and Vision 2030. All government agencies including Ministries are required to anchor their strategic plans on the Kenya Vision 2030 first Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2008–2012. Thus, the rationale of this study was to find out the influence strategic planning process has on the performance of ministries in Kenya and particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.

Strategic Planning

Generally, a plan is an intentional prior arrangement to achieve a particular purpose. Strategic planning is defined as a tool to determine the mission, vision, values, goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities, timelines and personnel responsible for moving an organization or institution from the current to the desired state in future (Chiuri and Kiumi, 2005). Strategic planning consists of competitive moves and business approaches managers employ to grow the business, attract and please customers, compete successfully, conduct operations and achieve the targeted level of performance. Strategic planning is fundamental in aligning organization's internal activities to the ever changing external environment. Organizations engage in strategic planning in order to achieve clarity of future direction, design internal action approaches, make proper choices and priorities, deal effectively with organizational

changes and uncertainties in external environment, build team work and expertise based on resources, processes and people and develop effective strategies to improve organizational performance (Cole, 2004 and Peng, 2009).

The concept of strategic planning has notably gained popularity in modern organizations due to scarcity of resources, increased competition, increased need to meet customer and stakeholder expectations and need to resolve issues effectively and efficiently. It is therefore evident that strategic planning is a vital tool to the present-day managers to navigate through the current complex, dynamic, competitive and uncertain business environment because as Gode (2009) correctly notes, strategic planners must adapt to a world where growth isn't steady; it can slow down, increase or be interrupted in an unpredictable manner.

Statement of the Problem

Modern Organizations in the Public and Private continue to struggle with performance issues owing to stiff competitive environment and increased demands by stakeholders Mbaka and Mugambi, (2014) highlighted that public and private sectors have so much in common in striving for excellence, fulfilment of Vision 2030 Strategy and for the best results, but at the same time these sectors are also very different. These differences are grounds for applying benchmarking method to identify possibilities for improvement. A number of public service reforms have been initiated by the Government of Kenya aiming at placing citizen satisfaction at the heart of policy making and service delivery in Kenya. The reform strategies the government has adopted since 2003 in order to improve service delivery in the public service include: rapid results approach, contracting, citizen, transformative leadership, values & ethics, institutional capacity building (GOK, 2007).

Previous studies generally shows that the use of strategic planning is beneficial to organizations, for instance Sarason and Tegarden (2013) argued that, an effective strategic planning system requires the strategic planning process to be linked with other management processes in an organization. Nevertheless, taking into account that strategic planning and management used in the public sector for well over two decades has become prevalent in governmental jurisdictions at the super national, national and local levels and comparing the application of this tool in both public and private sectors it is not that well decidedly who should copy from whom or rather benchmark from whom (Bryson, 2008).

In Kenya, various studies have been conducted on strategic plans and organizational performance for example; (Ongonge, 2013; Ayuya 2010; and Gode 2009), however none has analyzed the practical elements of strategic planning that is strategy direction, stakeholders involvement, environmental analysis and resource allocation and their influence in organizational performance in the context of public sector in Kenya. Majority of the studies

focussed on strategic planning and management (Nartisa, 2012), strategic planning process and decision-making processes (Muzainah Mansor and Mahamad Tayib, 2012). This gap necessitates an analysis of the influence of strategic planning process on performance of ministries in Kenya which forms the basis for the current study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical review

Strategic planning is the process of determining a company's long-term goals, identifying the best approach for achieving those goals and mobilizing the resources that will be needed in the execution of the strategic plan. It has long been used as a tool for transforming and revitalizing corporations, government agencies and non-profit organizations. Strategic planning metamorphosed from the widely known financial planning of the 1950s and long-range planning of the 1960s into strategic management of today. Strategic planning is based on several theories. This study will be based on the following theories; open system theory, contingency theory, resource based theory and industrial organizational economics theory

Open System Theory

Open systems theory refers simply to the concept that organizations are strongly influenced by their environment. The environment consists of other organizations that exert various forces of an economic, political, or social nature. The environment also provides key resources that sustain the organization and lead to change and survival (Bastedo, 2004). Organizations such as government ministries are open systems. They receive various inputs from environment; transform them in some way and export outputs. Ndegwa (2013) states that a deeper understanding of the interrelatedness of the influencing factors in the environment, when

applying open systems theory to the strategic planning model, produces a richer and better appreciation of the sub-systems that compose the larger synergistic general system.

Contingency Theory

Burnes (2004), referring to contingency theory, states that there is no one best way of managing organizations. This is because organizational factors such as organizational structure and culture, size, type and complexity of the organization compared to the situational factors shaping the industry landscape, renders the best practice or strategy in one organization in given industry at a given time irrelevant or obsolete in another set of situation. This theory affirms the complexity, dynamism and unpredictable nature of the environment as postulated by the complexity and chaos theory that questions the practicability and essence of formal planning under such environmental conditions and thus argues that the traditional approaches to strategic management may not be appropriate.

Resource based Theory

Firms are also viewed to be different based on the resources they are endowed with. Wernefelt (1984) is a proponent of the resource based theory. The resource based theory stipulates that firms perform better when they assemble resources that are valuable, durable, rare, difficult to imitate, non-substitutable and superior to competitor's resources and successfully bundle them into unique capabilities which they could use to generate competitive advantage and superior performance (Penrose, 1995). The resource based theory was popular in the 1960s when adoption of strategic planning practices was on increase both in the U.S.A. and overseas.

Industrial Organization Economics Theory

From mid-1970 to mid-1980 companies exhibited dissatisfaction with strategic planning majorly due to increased environmental turbulence, reduced business opportunities and increased competition. During this time economists analyzed the problems of the firm and the industry under the Industrial Organization Economics (IOE) theory whose key framework is the Structure-Conduct-Performance(S-C-P) paradigm. The IOE theorists sought to identify the correlation between the industry's performance, conduct of its firms and conduct of its firms and thus establish how firms operate and make economic contribution (Barney, 2007). The equivalent of S-C-P paradigm is the Environment Strategy Performance (ESP) framework in which performance is shaped by strategic choices based on environmental dynamics. This is anchored on Ansoff's (1999) proposition that all organizations are Environment Serving Organizations (ESO) which is within the premise of open systems theory (Haines, 1972).

After 1980, the input of behavioural scientists focusing on optimization and role of organizational behaviour became profound (Albanese & Van Fleet, 1983). This is because individual and group work is central to the extent to which an organization's strategy is effectively and efficiently implemented (Nzuve, 2007). Organizations are therefore in constant dilemma to manage organizational changes (to achieve an internal fit) and also adjust to external environmental changes in order to remain competitive (Burnes, 2004). Since 1980 onwards, strategic management has continued to develop and has been shaped more by the works of Michael Porter, Arthur Thompson, Strickland II, Prahalad, John Pearce and Richard Robinson, Gerry Johnson and Scholes and others (Yabs, 2007).

Strategic direction

Presence of a mission statement and vision spells the strategic direction of the organization. Weinrich (2007), states that a vision is the dream that an entrepreneur creates in his dream and is the root of all objectives. The mission of an organization is the unique aim that sets the organization apart from others of its type. He adds that objectives are goals or aims which the management wishes the organization achieve. These are the end points or pole-star towards which all business activities like organizing, staffing, directing and controlling are decided. Only after having defined those points can the manager determine the kind of organization, the kind of personnel and their qualification, the kind of motivation, supervision and direction and the kind of control techniques which he must employ to reach those points. Weinrich further states the purpose of an organization is its primary role defined by the society in which it operates.

Bernard, (2004) identifies the benefits of setting objectives as; providing a basis for planning and developing other types of plans such as policies, budget and procedures. It acts as motivator for individuals and departments of an enterprise mobilizing their activities with a sense of purpose, it helps in development of effective control that measure results and lead to corrective actions, it facilitates coordination behaviour of various groups which otherwise may pull in different directions, they function as a basis for managerial control by serving as standards against which actual performance can be measured, provides legitimacy to organization activities and finally it facilitate better management of organization by providing a basis for leading, guiding, directing and controlling the activities of various departments

Environmental analysis

Hambrick, (2001) defines environmental scanning as the managerial activity of learning about events and trends in the organisation's environment, conceiving it as the first step in the ongoing chain of perceptions and actions leading to an organisation's adaptation to its environment. The organization conducts an extensive internal and external environmental analysis to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and the opportunities and threats in the external environment. The findings of the analysis are used to make strategic choices from the alternatives at hand and strategic objectives are set. Bourgeois (2005), shows the importance of understanding the environment by stating that a firm which examines its environment accurately, tends to achieve a higher than average level of economic performance.

Stakeholder involvement

Watson and Reigeluth (2008) asserts that Stakeholders affected by the organization should be involved in the planning process since it helps the institution or department to receive valuable feedback both on successful efforts and on areas where improvements should be made. They further state that stakeholders have an important strategic role to play in the management of organisations since that are involved in planning and bring in new ideas some of which if implemented improve on the institutions infrastructure and delivery of service. This involvement throughout the process helps ensure that those who have major responsibilities to carry out the planning understand the plan and the reasons behind it. The involvement can contribute greatly to employees' commitment to mutual goals and a sense of organizational unity.

Resource Allocation

Murugan, (2006) states that resource allocation is done through a budget, which is defined as a statement of expected results expressed in numeral terms. It may be called a “quantified” plan. A budget may be expressed in financial terms; in terms of labour hours, units of product, or machine hours; or in any other numerically measurable terms. He states that budgeting is a significant part of both planning and the controlling processes and widely used by managers to plan, monitor and control various activities at every level of the organization. Tosi (2005) identified some of characteristics of efficient budgetary system which include budget oriented towards results, budgetary system should be more effective if the duties and responsibilities for all operations are well defined and rightly assigned budget should be simple and understandable, fair and objective. Budget should be based on documentable information and not simple guesswork and judgment.

Organisational Performance

Performance is the end result of activities while strategic planning aims to improve the quality of these results. It can be measured by quantitative methods (net or gross profit, return on investment, equity or capital and return on equity employed) or qualitative methods (absenteeism levels, job satisfaction, industrial relations, team work, best management practices, Corporate Social Responsibility, new product development, operational sufficiency, employee and stakeholder satisfaction, among others (Foster, 1993). Organizational performance is used as one indicator of effectiveness for small and large businesses and is a fundamental concern of many practicing managers. Ultimately, success and growth will be gauged by how well a firm does relative to the goals it has set for itself and as Sababu (2007) states; the formal strategic management systems significantly influence organizational performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design applied in this study was descriptive survey. Information was collected through questionnaires from the officers involved in strategic planning process at the MOALF headquarters in Nairobi; this was a representative sample of Government ministries in Kenya. The population of the study were the public officers working in the Ministry of agriculture headquarters in Nairobi and are involved in strategic planning process, from MOALF records, these employees are 1600. Only 10% of the population was used in this study. Data collected using the self-administered questionnaire was coded, verified for completeness and accuracy and was analyzed using quantitative approach to derive descriptive statistics/outputs. The study used the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) to generate reports and the descriptive statistics for various variables in the study. Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used in analysis of the data. Since the data sought to establish the relationship between the independent variable (Strategic planning process) and the dependent variable (performance), the measures of relations and associations, that is, correlation and regression were used. MOALF's performance was regressed against four variables of strategy planning namely strategic direction, stakeholder involvement, environmental scanning and resource allocation.

Findings of The Study

The overall objective of the study was to examine the role of strategic planning process on the organizational performance of Government Ministries in Kenya with an emphasis on the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The study used a sample of 160 respondents sampled from Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries out of which the response rate was 85.62%.

The major findings from the analysis show that strategic planning process has positive impact on the organization's performance. This can be achieved when the organization concentrates resources on important things, strategic directions, and stakeholder involvement in the undertakings of the organization and environmental analysis.

Also, there is high and positive correlation between strategic planning process and performance in Kenyan government ministries through frequent review auditing activities so as to make proper adjustments, well trained human resource to support the strategic planning process and adequate funds allocations to support the strategic planning process and properly utilization of the money.

Finally, the study found out that environmental analysis enhances performance of departments in government ministries. Strategic planning changes direction of the company to develop situation, analyses of opportunities and threats and provide better awareness of company's potential based on its strength and weakness. By doing this, organization will utilize the opportunities. Therefore, strategic planning is evitable to the success of any organization.

Strategic Direction

The study found out that there is a significance of strategic direction to organization performance. To realize the vision 2030, an oriented strategic direction and that of activities of the institution as well as more rational and intensively communicated goals, vision and mission is imperative. The results also indicate that Strategic Direction has the most significant positive influence towards Organizational performance of the Ministry.

Stakeholders' involvement

The study findings also revealed that stakeholders' involvement was a very important element of strategic planning with regards to organization performance. Given the above revelation the study concludes that, since stakeholders' involvement has a significant and positive relationship with organization performance more players need to be brought on board and heavy investment in relationship management to boost stakeholders' involvement for a more improved organization performance.

Resource allocation

The study found a significant and positive relationship between resource allocation and organization performance. Thus the study concludes that, for optimal effectiveness of the ministry, resource allocation aspect of strategic planning is very vital. Resource scheduling through budget absorption rate consideration should be fine-tuned in that, the ministry allocation should meet the budget expectations and the ministry official are expected to be good stewards in use of the resources for the development of the activity of the institution.

Environmental analysis

Finally, the study also revealed that environmental analysis had both positive and significant relationship with organization performance. The study found that more environmental scanning and takes notice of dynamics. More investment in this regard can go a long way in achieving regional and national recognition and this hypothetically can expand the depth and breadth of opportunities available.

Inferential Statistics

Regression Analysis

In this study a multiple linear regression model was implemented to identify the relationship between the four independent variables and the dependent variable which is ministerial performance. The study applied the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions for the study. The finding of the study is as shown in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.726 ^a	.527	.512	.70701	.527	36.699	4	13	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Allocation , Stakeholders Involvement, Environmental Analysis, Strategic Direction

All the four independent variables (strategic planning process elements) that were studied, explain only 52.7 % of the ministry performance as represented by the R Square (R²). This

implies that strategic directions, environmental analysis, stakeholder involvement and resource allocation contributes significantly to performance of departments in the ministry of agriculture, livestock and fisheries. Consequently, other factors not studied in this research contribute 47.3% of the ministerial performance.

Table 4.10: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA^a)

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	73.379	4	18.345	36.699	.000 ^b
	Residual	65.982	132	.500		
	Total	139.361	136			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Allocation , Stakeholders Involvement, Environmental Analysis, Strategic Direction

In an attempt to test the significant of the model, the study used ANOVA. From Table 4.10 the P-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significance in predicting the influence of strategic directions, environmental analysis, stakeholder involvement and resource allocation affect organization performance in government ministries in Kenya. The F critical at 5% level of significance is 2.46. Since F calculated (value =36.699) is greater than the F critical, this shows that the overall model is significant. The coefficients of the multiple regression models are presented in the table 4.11

Table 4.11: Regression Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.493	.526		1.699	.001
	Strategic Direction	.381	.126	.270	3.553	.002
	Environmental Analysis	.218	.145	.215	2.724	.027
	Stakeholder Involvement	.266	.075	.239	3.026	.002
	Resource Allocation	.188	.069	.214	2.509	.032

a. Dependent Variable: PERFORMANCE

The results indicate that Strategic Direction has the most significant positive influence towards Organizational performance of the Ministry. This is shown by the regression analysis t-value of 3.553 and a p-value of 0.002 at 95% level of significance that is less than 5%. Stake holders’ involvement comes in second in terms of positive significance in influencing Organizational Performance of the Ministry with a regression analysis t-value calculated at

3.026 and a p-value of 0.002 at 95% level of significance that is less than 5%. Environmental Analysis was found to be positively significant in influencing Organizational performance of the Ministry with a regression analysis t-value of 2.724 and a p-value of 0.027 at 95% level of significance that is less than 5%. The results further show that Resource Allocation ranked as the least positively significant in influencing the Organizational Performance of the Ministry with a regression analysis t-value of 2.509 and a p-value of 0.032 at 95% level of significance that is less than 5%.

Conclusions of the study

The study concluded that strategic planning process is vital for ensuring continued good organizational performance and only those organizations that practice some form of strategic planning process will survive. It is worthy to note that strategic planning in highly valued and applied by the most successful and best managed organizations in Kenya. The central dynamic of this concept is the conviction that, the uncertainty and pace of change can help on its mission. It is hoped that if properly adopted, strategic planning will improve all government agency's client satisfaction, reduced Implementation cost, staff moral and retain accountability. Successful strategic planning is not just a rational model to plot the course for years ahead, but as a narrative between the organization and the environment, anticipating the unpredictability of external influences, the stakeholder involvement and adequate allocation of resources. Therefore organization must flush up strategic issues for top managers to make better decisions so as to do better project.

The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between strategic planning process and Ministerial performance and that both the Ministry and the workers benefit from strategic planning in the sense that the organization can achieve their goals while workers can benefit in the sense that it provides clarification of individual responsibilities thereby contributing to motivation.

Recommendation

The study recommends that, successful strategic planning is not just a rational model to plot the course for years ahead, but as a narrative between the organization and the environment, anticipating the unpredictability of external influences, the stakeholder involvement and adequate allocation of resources.

The ministry should improve stakeholders' involvement through structure relationship management systems so as to attract and engage prospective stakeholders through partnerships and collaborations for collective and mutual benefits in the strategic objectives of the ministry.

Advance the stewardship of institutional and environmental resources by further streamlining the ministry operations where efficiencies can be gained, making optimal use of prior

investments in systems, re-aligning infrastructure with evolving needs, securing protected information, and minimizing waste attributable to technology use.

With regards to strategic direction, the study recommends that, the ministry develops goals and objectives continuously and invest in assurance tradition and stability during changes which helps in redirecting behavior. The management of government ministries should push for better performance by finding ways to improve the existing strategy and how it is being executed. Ministries in Kenya need to understand strategic planning and to be skilled in strategic thinking, strategic analysis and methods of strategy execution is a basic aspect that all managers should always take into consideration.

Finally, by adopting strategic planning processes as a tool for improving organizational performance, government agencies would have chosen a path that will bring progress. The ministries should therefore not waver in its resolve to entrench strategic planning as a means to sustainable management reform in its operations.

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